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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9265
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 002040

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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CCA AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: COSTA RICA: TITLE III SUSPENSION OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A)STATE 158768, B) SAN JOSE 1061

¶1. The Costa Rican government remains one of the region's leading critics of the Castro regime and a strong advocate for democratic change and human rights reforms in Cuba. Costa Rica shows no signs that it would consider re-establishing diplomatic relations with the Castro government, which were severed in 1961. The USG should encourage and bolster Costa Rica's continued support for democracy in Cuba. Suspending Title III of the Libertad Act in regard to Costa Rica remains in the USG national interest.

¶2. Costa Rican criticism of the Cuban government has continued throughout the past six months. Jose Manuel Echandi, a member of Costa Rica's legislative body, took special interest in the case of an imprisoned dissident, Normando Hernandez. (One of Echandi's principal advisers is a Cuban expatriate.) Per the legislator's request, the Costa Rican immigration authority granted Hernandez permission to enter the country for health reasons. After the Costa Rican consul in Havana went to visit the imprisoned dissident in May, the Cuban authorities transferred Mr. Hernandez to a more restrictive prison, prompting the Costa Rican legislator to announce that he would sue Cuba at the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. In July, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias confirmed that his administration would not reestablish diplomatic relations with Castro's government.

¶3. The following responses are keyed to Ref A questions:

A) Post is unaware of any Costa Rican investments in Cuba.
B) Post is unaware of any bilateral trade agreements between Costa Rica and Cuba.
C) Post is unaware of any exchange programs between Costa Rica and Cuba. A limited number of Costa Rican students have accepted scholarships to study medicine and film in Cuba, but Post is unaware of any formal exchange or scholarship programs between Cuban and Costa Rican universities. Post is unaware of any Costa Ricans who have traveled to Cuba for medical treatment, given the availability of publicly subsidized health care in Costa Rica. At any given time, there are between six and ten Cuban doctors working in Costa Rican hospitals, most of them providing radiological treatment at Hospital Mexico in San Jose.
D) Costa Rica has worked to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba. These efforts include the above actions by Diputado Jose Manuel Echandi and President Arias's public statements in July and earlier (see reftel B).
E) Since our last Title III Suspension Report (in June, Ref B), there have been no/no high-level Costa Rican diplomatic visits to Cuba or high-level Cuban diplomatic visits to Costa Rica.

BRENNAN